



Adult Advocacy
Centers

Needs Assessment: Human Trafficking and People with Disabilities

Fall 2020

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Introduction

Adult Advocacy Centers

The Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs) are a nonprofit organization that exists to teach the world different ways to listen to people with disabilities, particularly when they are victims of crime. To accomplish this goal, the AACs work in partnership with state, regional and community agencies to coordinate a response that promotes the safety and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

To further this goal, the AACs plan to build regional centers throughout Ohio that will offer forensic medical exams, evidence collection by trained forensic nurse examiners, forensic interviews, and service coordination by Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs). Each center will be universally designed and offer complete accessibility for all disability types. AACs staff will be present at each center to provide forensic interviews, assessments, safety planning and service coordination, using a trauma-informed approach. In an effort to reach the rural areas in Ohio, the AACs also plan to have mobile RV units.

To promote additional services for crime victims with disabilities, the AACs are offering forensic interview training through Project FIND (Forensic Interviewing Individuals with Disabilities) in conjunction with Modell Consulting Group. Project FIND is a forensic interview protocol specifically designed to meet the needs of crime victims with disabilities. Project FIND's protocol was developed to be used by professionals and advocates to gather information from a crime victim with a disability in the most reliable and legally defensible manner. Specific information regarding Project FIND training is listed below. The AACs are currently able to offer Project FIND training to Ohio professionals without cost thanks to a VOCA grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

The AACs are offering a virtual five-day Project FIND training for professionals with previous interview training and extensive experience in either forensic interviewing or work with individuals with disabilities. This training is founded in forensic interviewing best practices with considerations and adaptations for needed accommodations. More information about this five-day training can be found using the following link adultadvocacycenters.org/training/#four.

The AACs are also offering a virtual two-day prosecutor training. This training is designed for prosecutors who want to increase their knowledge about the needs of crime victims with disabilities and to learn additional options for criminal charges in these cases. This training also focuses on interviewing crime victims with disabilities. More information about this two-day prosecutor training may be found at adultadvocacycenters.org/training/#two.

The Intersectionality Between Human Trafficking and People with Disabilities

Data assessment regarding victims of human trafficking with disabilities is problematic, as there are no national or international studies that include the collection of these specific statistics. There are several recognized reports concluding that having a disability places an individual at an increased risk of criminal victimization. For example, data from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, place the rate of violent victimization perpetrated against people with disabilities at more than twice the rate of violent victimization of individuals without disabilities.¹ Furthermore, violent victimization classified as serious crimes (rape, sexual assault and aggravated assault) was experienced three times more frequently by persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities.

Identified risk factors for human trafficking include, but are not limited to, the presence of a disability, poverty, previous abuse and neglect. For many people with disabilities, more than one risk factor is present. Because human traffickers seek people with perceived vulnerabilities, victims of previous violence and social discrimination are especially targeted. Additionally, “violence and abuse may be normalized, or beliefs of shame or unworthiness may lead to future susceptibility to human trafficking.”²

Although Ohio-specific data has been collected regarding victims of human trafficking, disability-related information has been omitted from the process. Ohio Revised Code Section 109.66 requires local law enforcement to collect data on human trafficking investigations and report this information to the Ohio Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). In 2018, law enforcement reported 242 human trafficking investigations, leading to 80 arrests and 61 successful criminal convictions. While data regarding victims is kept regarding gender, age and race, information on disability is not collected.³

In addition to a lack of studies and data collection, there is often a systemic failure to identify

1 Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2015 Statistical tables, (US Department of Justice, 2017), bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capdo913s.pdf

2 humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/human-trafficking/victims

3 2018 Human Trafficking Annual Report. ohioattorneygeneral.gov/getattachment/8e4c6cd2-efa6-4f0f-8e8f-2422736322bd/HumanTrafficking_2018_WEB.aspx

individuals with disabilities as victims of human trafficking. Specifically, human trafficking committed against an individual with a disability may only be categorized as sexually assault. The failure to identify a person with a disability as a victim of human trafficking may lessen the victim's legal recourse, right to private cause of action, and access to resources and services.

AACs' Needs Assessment

This needs assessment regarding human trafficking and people with disabilities was written to identify and quantify the problem of human trafficking for individuals with disabilities in the State of Ohio. Using the information gathered through this assessment, the AACs are proposing next steps to improve prevention, investigation, and services in these cases, and to provide much need supports for the victims of human trafficking

The AACs contacted the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and Ohio's Anti-Human Trafficking Coalitions to gather information regarding the systems and services that are currently in place for human trafficking victims with disabilities. DODD provided data regarding Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs) involving human trafficking and services that they provide. Ohio's Anti-Human Trafficking Coalitions were asked to complete a survey on disability-specific data and information.

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

DODD offers a wide-array of services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DODD also oversees the county-based service system by monitoring and managing all MUIs, which are investigated by the county boards of developmental disabilities and filed with DODD for review.

A MUI is defined as any alleged, suspected or actual occurrence of an incident that adversely affects the health and welfare of an individual who receives services from a county board of developmental disabilities. MUI categories are defined in OAC Section 5123-17-02 and include accidental or suspicious death, exploitation, failure to report, misappropriation, neglect, physical abuse, prohibited sexual relations, rights code violation, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, attempted suicide, death, medical emergency, missing individual, peer to peer act, significant injury, law enforcement involvement, unanticipated hospitalization and unapproved behavior support.

DODD reviewed all MUIs involving sexual abuse, exploitation and misappropriation from January 1, 2018, through March 1, 2020. During this period, there were eight MUIs that involved an allegation of human trafficking.

The reporting process for MUIs involving potential human trafficking is as follows:

- All MUIs are filed and investigated by the County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD) if the victim has been determined eligible for services.
- DODD reviews all MUI investigations and prevention plans filed by the county boards of developmental disabilities. Prevention plans are new guidelines, care plans, or medical interventions that are put into place in an effort to prevent the recurrence of the incident.
- The Ohio Administrative Code that governs the reporting and investigations of MUIs does not include a category for human trafficking.

- MUIs involving human trafficking are filed under the category of exploitation unless the alleged trafficker is a paid caregiver. If the alleged trafficker is a paid caregiver, the MUI may be reclassified as sexual abuse or misappropriation.
- DODD's Intake Department issues an internal alert for all cases that may involve human trafficking.
- MUIs involving allegations of human trafficking are reviewed by DODD to ensure appropriate and immediate actions are taken, which include but are not limited to:
 - Immediate removal of the victim from the trafficking environment, if possible
 - Medical assessment, possibly by a Forensic Nurse Examiner
 - Notification to local law enforcement
 - Provision of trauma support to the victim
 - Notifications to a guardian and family, when appropriate, and
 - Arrangement of services through Ohio's human trafficking coalitions

| Alleged Human Trafficking Cases | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 (to present) |
|---------------------------------|------|------|-------------------|
| Total | 1 | 5 | 2 |

MUI Definitions and Allegations of Human Trafficking

The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) used by DODD related to these MUI categories are listed below.

- **OAC Section 5123-17-02(C)(16)(a)(ix)** defines sexual abuse as the unlawful sexual conduct or sexual contact as those terms are defined in section 2907.01 of the Revised Code and the commission of any act prohibited by Chapter 2907 of the Revised Code (e.g., public indecency, importuning, voyeurism) when the sexual conduct, sexual contact or act involves an individual.
- **OAC Section 5123-17-02(C)(16)(a)(ii)** defines exploitation as the unlawful or improper act of using an individual or an individual's resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit or gain.
- **OAC Section 5123-17-02(C)(16)(a)(iv)** defines misappropriation as depriving, defrauding or otherwise obtaining the real or personal property of an individual by any means prohibited by the Revised Code, including Chapters 2911 and 2913 of the Revised Code.

DODD's website provides resources on human trafficking. These resources include risk factors, how to report suspected human trafficking, information regarding the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, and human trafficking awareness. These resources may be found at the following link: odd.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/dodd/health-and-welfare/toolkit/human-trafficking-prevention.

Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions

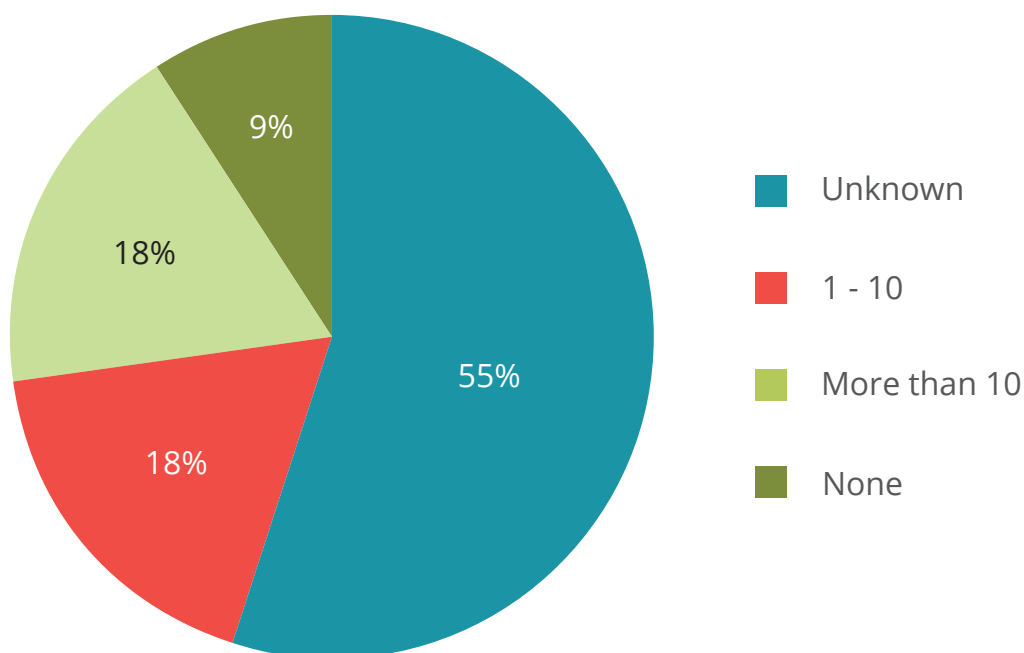
Work performed by Ohio's 24 Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions varies and may include community outreach, direct services, training, working with law enforcement or providing referrals to appropriate services. A map of the coalitions can be found at the site listed below: humantrafficking.ohio.gov/coalitions.html.

AACs' Survey for Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions

In an effort to evaluate the services needed for victims of human trafficking with disabilities, the AACs sent a survey to Ohio's 24 Anti-Trafficking Coalitions, and 14 coalitions responded. Summaries of these responses are listed below, followed by a conclusion. The AACs suggested next steps were developed from the coalitions' comments and responses.

Question 1

How many victims of human trafficking did your coalition assist in 2019?

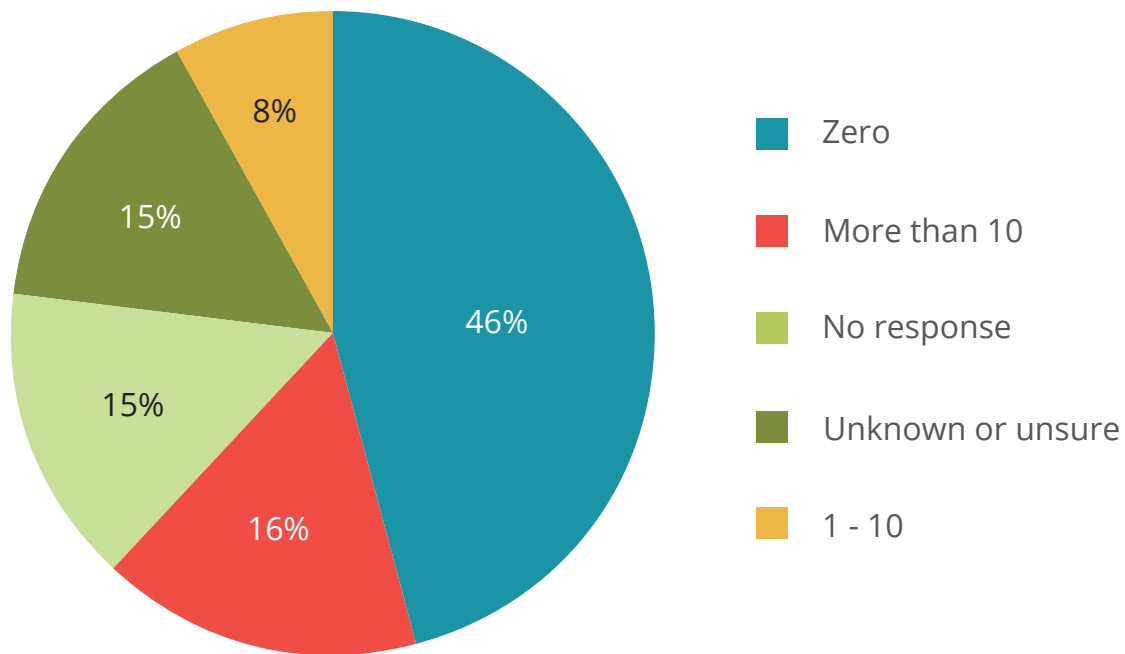


Question 1 Summary

Of the coalitions that responded to the AACs' survey and kept data, 18% reported that they assisted 1-10 victims, and 18% reported that they assisted more than 10 victims. Nine percent of respondents reported that they did not serve any victims of human trafficking in 2019.

Question 2

How many victims of human trafficking with disabilities did your coalition assist in 2019?

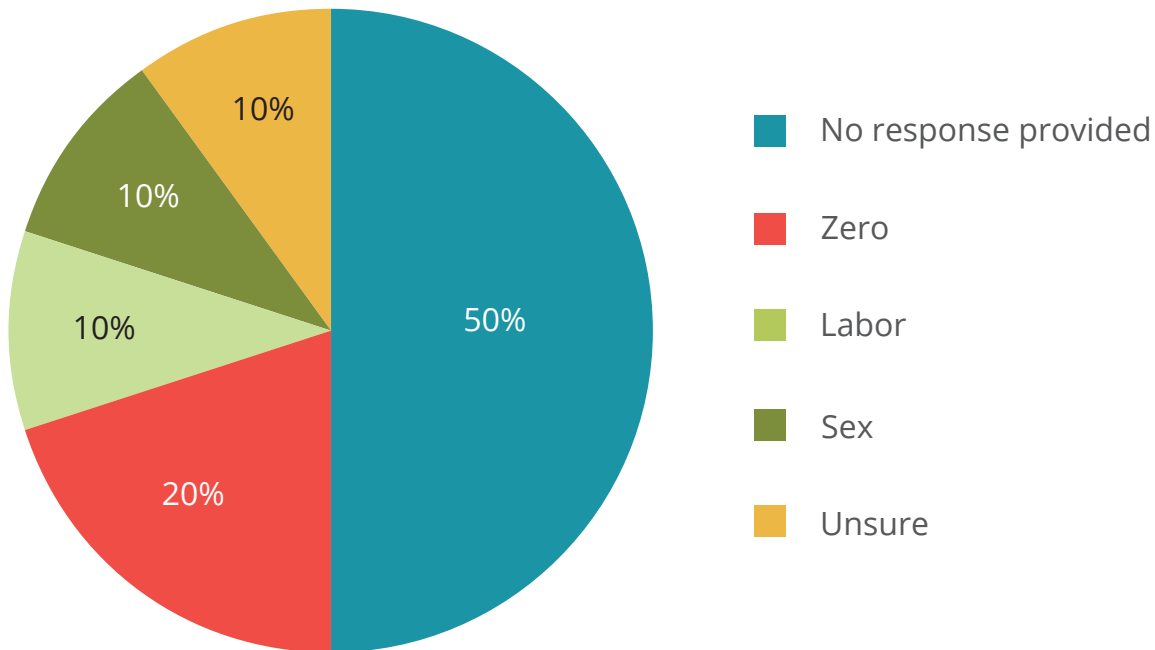


Question 2 Summary

The majority of coalitions did not screen for disabilities. One coalition screens all victims of human trafficking for signs of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Question 3

Please provide data that quantifies the type of human trafficking for the victims of human trafficking with disabilities that your coalition helped?

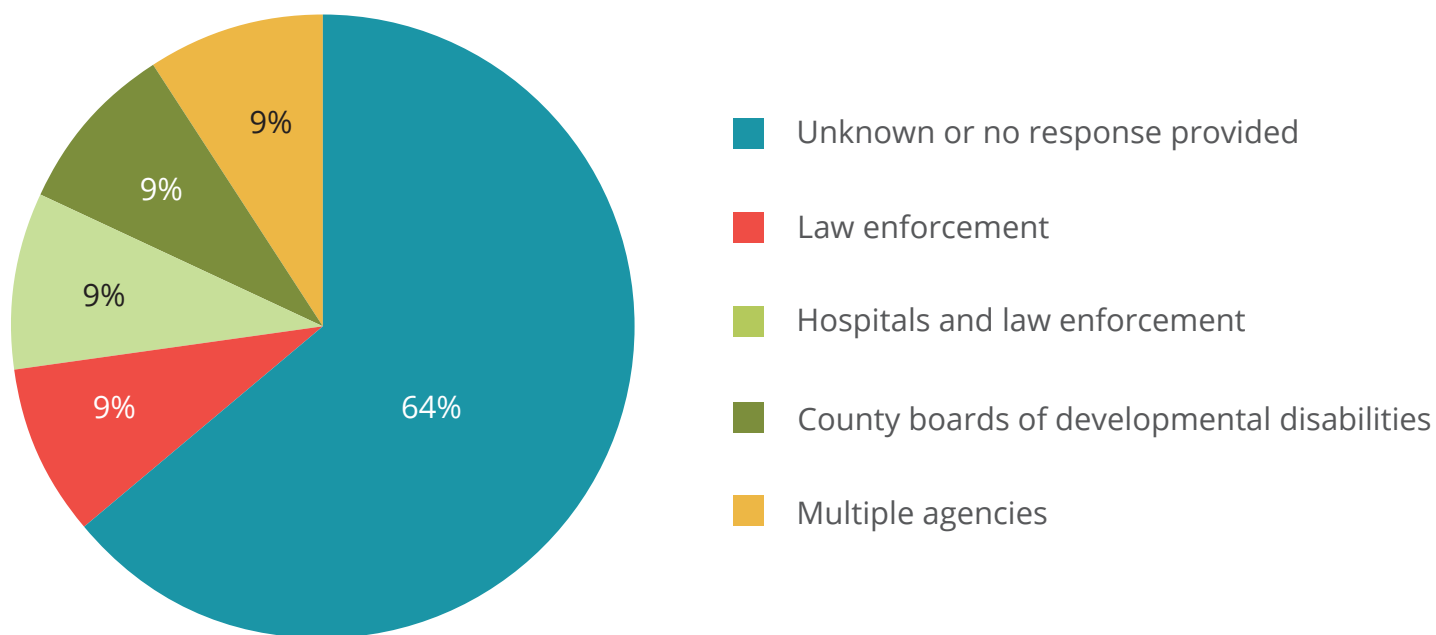


Question 3 Summary

Fifty percent of the coalitions did not respond to this question. Twenty percent of the coalitions responded that zero victims of human trafficking were helped. Ten percent responded that victims of sex trafficking with disabilities were assisted, 10% responded that victims of labor trafficking were assisted, and 10% reported that there were unsure of the number victims of human trafficking they had assisted.

Question 4

How are victims of human trafficking with disabilities referred for help?

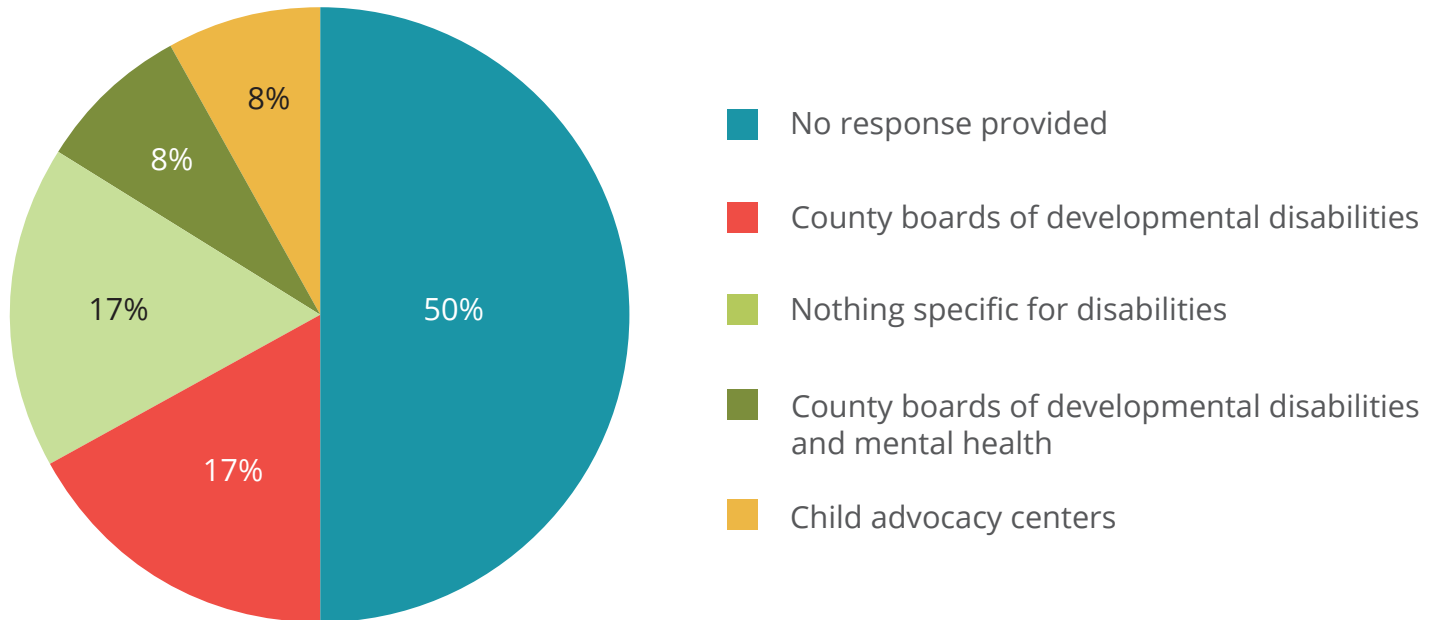


Question 4 Summary

The majority of responders did not provide an answer to this question or were not able to provide data relevant to this question. The remaining responses were split evenly among law enforcement, hospitals, county boards of developmental disabilities, and multiple social service agencies.

Question 5

What services and supports exist for trafficking victims with disabilities?

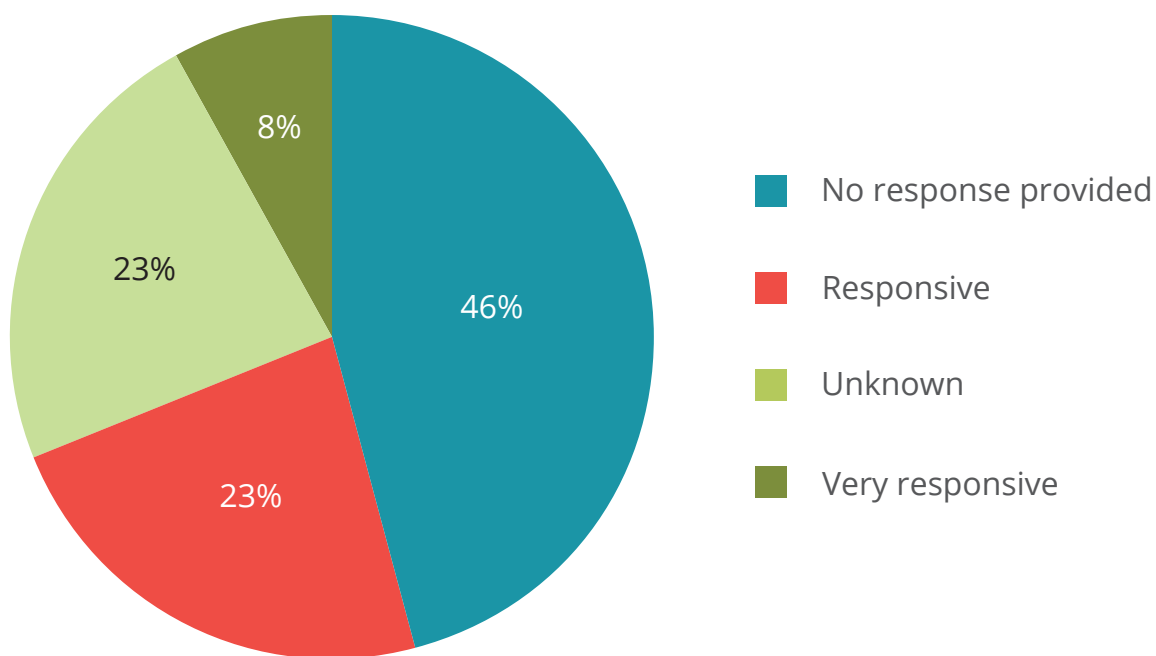


Question 5 Summary

Half of the coalitions did not respond to this question. Of the remaining responses, 17% reported there were no specific services for victims with disabilities and another 17% reported that some services were available through the county board of developmental disabilities and the county's local mental health organizations.

Question 6

How responsive are these services and supports to victims of human trafficking with disabilities?

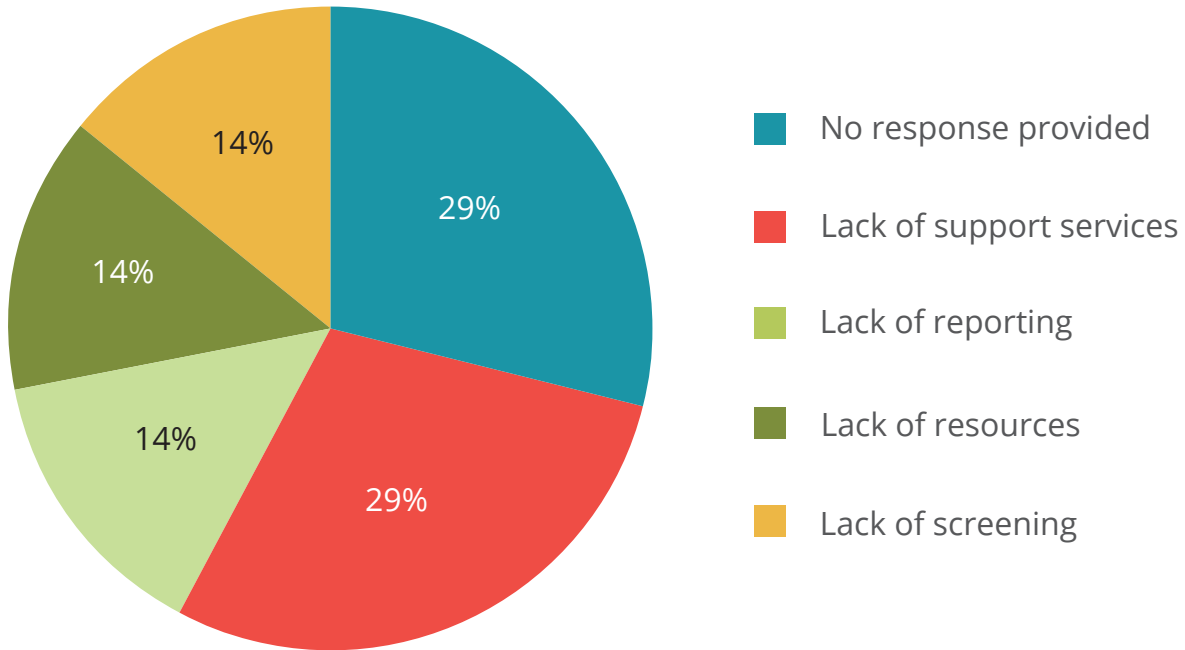


Question 6 Summary

Forty-six percent of coalitions did not respond to this question. Of the remaining responses, 23% reported that the services were responsive, 23% reported that the responsiveness of these services was unknown, and the remaining 8% reported that the services were very responsive.

Question 7

What are the barriers to providing services and supports to victims of human trafficking with disabilities?

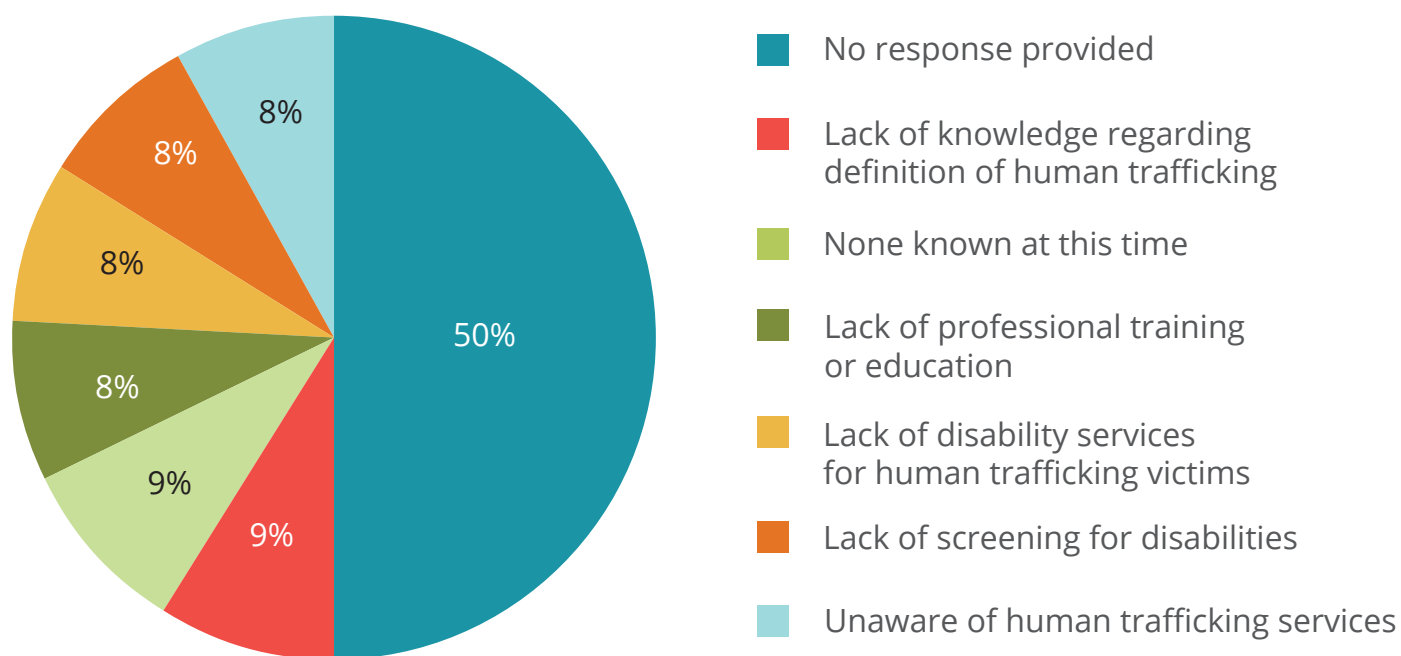


Question 7 Summary

The largest response category identifying barriers was a lack of support services. There were three remaining response categories: lack of screening, lack of resources and lack of reporting.

Question 8

What are the barriers to accessing services for victims of human trafficking with disabilities?

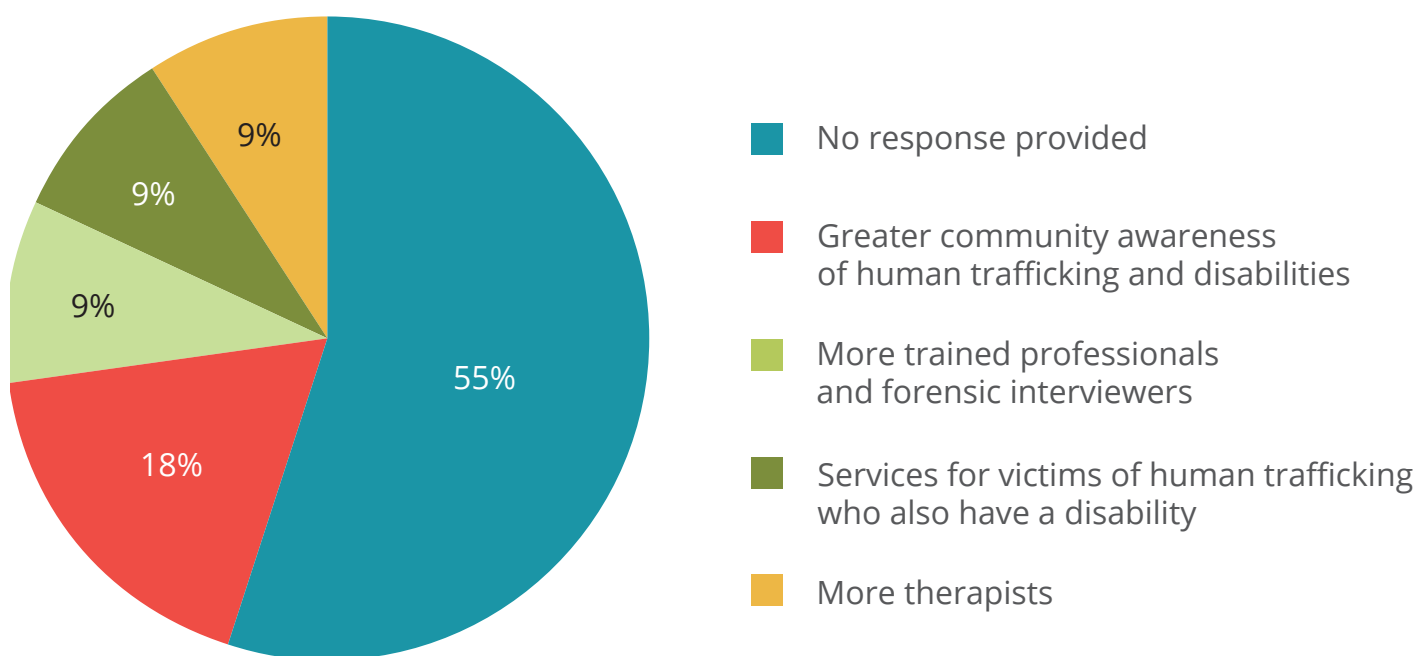


Question 8 Summary

Fifty-percent of the coalitions did not respond to this survey question. Remaining responses were evenly divided amongst six categories that include lack of professional training or education, unaware of human trafficking services, lack of disability services for human trafficking victims, lack of screening for disabilities, none known at this time, and lack of knowledge regarding the definition of human trafficking.

Question 9

What assistance and supports are needed to effectively serve trafficking victims with disabilities?

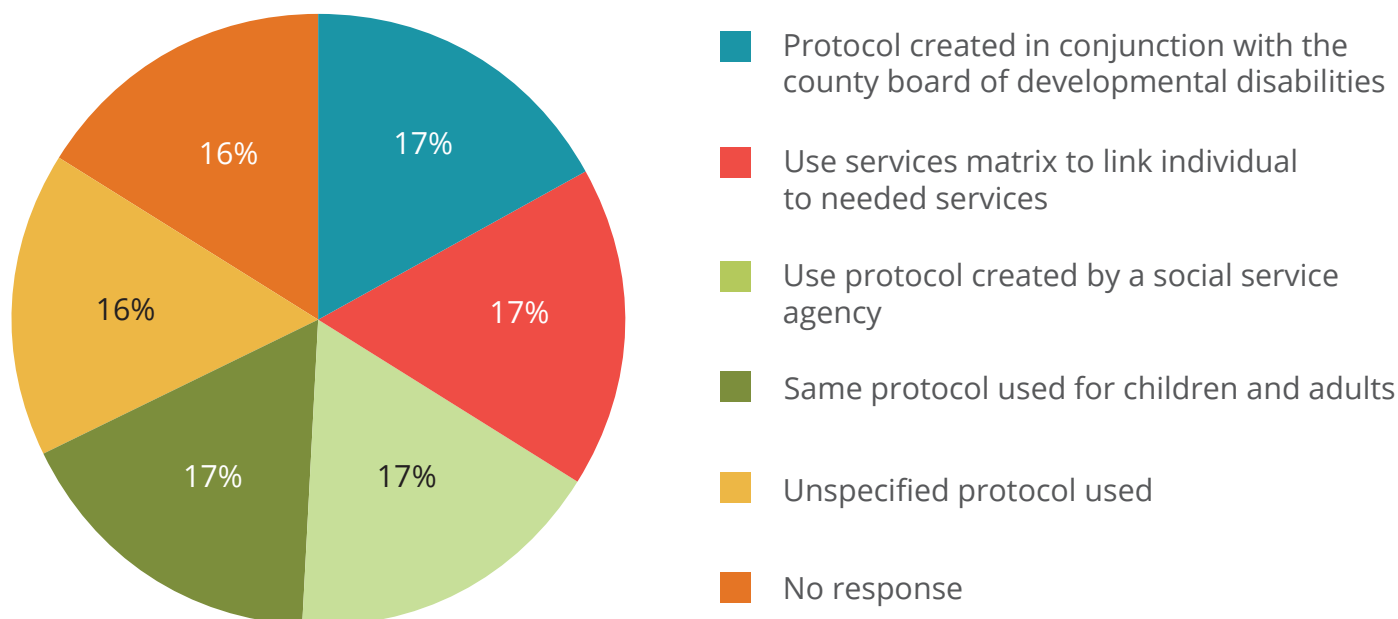


Question 9 Summary

Of the responses received, the largest category was a need for greater community awareness regarding human trafficking and disabilities. There were three additional categories, all at 9%, that included a need for more therapists, services for human trafficking victims who also have a disability, and more trained professionals and forensic interviewers.

Question 10

What protocols exist for human trafficking victims with disabilities?



Question 10 Additional Comments

This question elicited six relatively even categories from coalitions, including protocol used, no response, a protocol that was created with assistance from the county board of developmental disabilities, the use of a service matrix, a protocol created by a community service agency, and the same protocol used for children and adults.

Additional Comments Provided by Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions

- We provide extensive outreach to our community regarding human trafficking.
- Screening tools for victims of human trafficking who may have disabilities would be helpful.
- Prosecution of human trafficking cases is difficult, and resources are needed to improve prosecution rates.
- Increased and defined services should be provided to people with disabilities who are also victims of human trafficking.



Conclusion and Next Steps

Information collected by the AACs through DODD and Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions points to a need for comprehensive, statewide outreach efforts and support services specifically targeted toward people with disabilities who have been victims of human trafficking. These two activities must be implemented simultaneously to appropriately address the needs of victims of human trafficking with disabilities. Ongoing training provided by the AACs will provide movement toward this goal.

Currently, there is not a well-established bridge connecting disability and anti-human-trafficking organizations in Ohio. This disconnect limits the services and assistance that can be provided to victims of human trafficking. By working together, victims of human trafficking will have an increased chance of receiving holistic and trauma-informed services. In addition, tools currently used by advocates do not typically include a screening process to identify disabilities. The absence of a consistent screening process results in a lack of data collection pertaining to victims of human trafficking who also have disabilities. This is especially detrimental as this lack of information creates an increased likelihood that victims of human trafficking with disabilities will not receive needed accommodations and referrals to disability-related services. In response to the information gathered from DODD and Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions, and in an effort to promote collaborative efforts to benefit individuals with disabilities who have been victims of human trafficking, the AACs plan to take several steps, which are detailed below.

1. Screening Tools and Resource Guidebook

The AACs will create screening tools for different disability types, including mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and older adults. We will also write a comprehensive guidebook of relevant resources for individuals with disabilities who have been victims of

human trafficking. The screening tools will be one-page documents that may be used by disability organizations and Ohio's Anti-Human-Trafficking Coalitions to promote data collection and encourage referrals to disability and service organizations to establish eligibility and service coordination.

2. Prosecutor's Guidebook

Prosecuting human trafficking cases involving victims with disabilities is difficult but possible. In fact, one of the first human trafficking cases in the U.S. involved 55 Mexican citizens who were Deaf. These individuals were physically abused and forced to peddle trinkets on the New York City subway. The traffickers served sentences in Mexico, and were later extradited to the U.S. to face criminal charges. After a jury trial, 18 members of the peddling ring were convicted and received sentences ranging from 1 to 15 years.⁴

To support prosecutors and increase prosecution rates in human trafficking cases involving a victim with a disability, the AACs plan to develop a comprehensive prosecutor's guidebook. This guidebook will be designed for use by prosecutors as a resource that will identify barriers, case law, strategies, and solutions to prosecuting these difficult cases.

3. Training Development

To ensure that a standard, comprehensive and effective interview process is used by investigators, the AACs plan to create a forensic interview protocol for victims of human trafficking with disabilities. This protocol will be used by professionals who have been trained and certified by the AACs. The AACs are also creating an anti-human trafficking guidebook for professionals that will include a listing of partner agencies, data and statistics, initiatives to end human trafficking, and resources.

4. Outreach

The groundwork for support services, including trauma counseling, must be structured in conjunction with outreach to victims of human trafficking with disabilities, especially victims who do not initially report but are able and willing to disclose with appropriate support. Currently, there are no comprehensive statewide outreach efforts specifically for people with disabilities who have been victims of human trafficking. The AACs plan to work with existing organizations to expand outreach efforts to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the AACs will create an anti-human-trafficking guidebook for people with disabilities that will outline national, state, and local resources.

5. Pilot Programs

The AACs plan to pilot support service programs that will address the lack of statewide support services geared toward serving human trafficking victims with disabilities.

4 Journal of Human Trafficking. (2000). Low Hanging Fruit: How Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Erased foreign-born Victims of Child Trafficking from Anti-Trafficking Efforts in the United States. tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23322705.2020.1691821



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By working collaboratively with the passion and expertise of partner organizations, the AACs believe that positive systemic changes can begin to take place if we:

- Train professionals to screen for disabilities;
- Prosecute cases perpetrated against people with disabilities;
- Coordinate outreach to the disability community to increase their knowledge about the signs of human trafficking; and
- Provide needed services for human trafficking victims with disabilities.



**Adult Advocacy
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